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*Record Supplement*

*for*

*November, 1942*

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<b>BAM</b>	La Boite à Musique	<b>NMR</b>	New Music Recordings
<b>BN</b>	Blue Note	<b>OL</b>	L'Oiseau Lyre
<b>C</b>	Columbia (CM, Masterworks Set)	<b>P</b>	Parlophone
<b>D</b>	Decca	<b>PAR</b>	Paraclete
<b>FRM</b>	Friends of Recorded Music	<b>PAT</b>	Pathé
<b>G</b>	Gramophone (H.M.V.)	<b>PD</b>	Polydor
<b>GSV</b>	Gramophone Shop "Varieties"	<b>T</b>	Telefunken
<b>GT</b>	Gamut	<b>TI</b>	Timely
<b>K</b>	Keynote	<b>TC</b>	Technichord
<b>LUM</b>	Lumen	<b>V</b>	Victor (VM, Masterpiece Set)

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Vol. V

*Record Supplement for November, 1942*

No. 11

## BARBER (SAMUEL)

BARBER: *Adagio for Strings*. NBC Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Arturo Toscanini. 12" record (2 sides) No. V-11-8287; price \$1.05.

While the symphonies of William Schuman, Aaron Copland's *Quiet City* and *Suite from Billy the Kid*, and a half-dozen other compositions by American composers remain unrecorded, it is difficult to understand this record. True, Samuel Barber's *Adagio for Strings* is unlikely to offend the most unrepentant antimodernist. But it is also very unlikely to bring any but the palest musical pleasure. It breathes the negative virtue that arises from absence of temptation. The beautiful strings of the NBC Symphony Orchestra do it full justice under Mr. Toscanini's baton. The full richness of their beauty is lost, however, in a recording that suffers — to hazard a guess — from poor studio conditions, a lack of spacious resonance that results in lack of depth and height. In times of opulence, there is reason for recording and issuing almost anything. Now, however, one question returns insistently: why, when Victor can issue only three sets and two single records in two months, should this polite, uninteresting music inadequately recorded be one of the singles?

## BRUCH (MAX)

BRUCH: *Concerto No. 1, G minor, Opus 26, for Violin and Orchestra*. Nathan Milstein (violin), with the New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra, conducted by John Barbirolli. Three 12" records (6 sides) in Set C-M517†; price complete with album \$3.67.

The history of music is studded with the names of minor composers who once or twice in a prolific lifetime succeeded in putting into a work sufficient vitality to keep it alive long after the majority of their efforts died of low blood pressure. For all but the musicologist, as examples, Vieuxtemps, Wieniawski, and Bruch are recognizable names because each composed one violin concerto of enduring popularity. In Bruch's case, indeed, only one composition in addition to the *Concerto in G minor* — his variations on *Kol Nidrei*, for cello and orchestra — is to be heard except on rare occasions. The *Concerto*, however, is staple. It is expertly made, decked out with melodies of pleasantly lyric quality, and excellently fitted to the soloist. That it is music of high distinction few would care to claim.

Columbia already has in its catalogue a wholly adequate recording of the *Concerto in G*, by Alfredo Campoli and an orchestra conducted by Walter Goehr (C-M322†).



## MOZART OPERAS ON RECORDS

Year after year, month after month, the recording companies turn out records. A very large majority of the titles issued appear to the average music-lover and record-collector to have been arrived at in an entirely haphazard manner. Well represented compositions are frequently re-recorded. Poor combinations of music and interpretive artist are commonplace. Wide gaps are left in the works of the great composers while feeble works of third-rate men, works not even justified by popularity, are released with advertising fanfares. Great artists are given poor, sloppy recording, while mediocrity is given the reward of carefully planned and exquisitely carried out transference to wax.

From time to time, however, great music, masterful interpretation, and superb recording are brought together, and the results more than compensate for hundreds of dreary failures. Columbia's series of Beethoven Quartets by the Budapest Quartet comes to mind. Or Sir Thomas Beecham's recordings of Mozart Symphonies. Or Landowska's *Goldberg Variations*. There are numerous others. Very high among them, occupying, indeed, a unique place in gramophonic history, are the four complete Mozart operas recorded by HMV and issued domestically by Victor. To praise the operas themselves would be presumptuous. The choice of interpretive artists — including as it does such top-flight conductors as Fritz Busch and Sir Thomas Beecham, and such singers as Willi Domgraf-Fassbaender, Helge Roswaenge, Erna Berger, Tiana Lemnitz, Gerhard Hüsch, Salvatore Baccaloni, Aulikki Rautawaara, and Luise Helletsgruber — would have made these recordings superior even had the mechanical processes of manufacture broken down somewhere along the line. The fact, however, is that the recordings as such have hardly been surpassed.

Critics are not lacking to call *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, or *Die Zauberflöte* — the selection of one of the three varies — Mozart at his best, and therefore not opera merely, but music itself, at one of its loftiest peaks. *Così fan tutte* is seldom ranked as high, but is nevertheless crammed with the creative humor that was one of Mozart's many unique gifts. The authority and beauty of the gramophone's presentation of this quartet of masterpieces would alone justify all its enthusiasts claim for it. Any one of these recorded operas is in itself the most solid basis for a record library. Instrumental interludes, solo arias, and concerted numbers pour forth in unstinted profusion, performed and recorded with life-giving fidelity. While listening to *Don Giovanni*, for example, it is not difficult to understand why Tchaikovsky, his whole life long, regarded that opera as on a plane above which music had never risen. A dozen, twenty, or more of the records making up these sets would, if issued as singles, in themselves be unquestionable candidates for any list of the finest vocal recordings thus far issued.

Naturally, in undertakings so vast and complex, there are moments when individual performances do not keep to the general high level of the entirety. Such minor flaws, however, are negligible in the midst of the opportunity to hear, as often as one wishes, Mozart's four operatic masterpieces performed superbly and, with only a minor exception here and there, exactly as he intended them.



## THE RECORDINGS

**LE NOZZE DI FIGARO.** The Glyndebourne Festival Opera Company, conducted by Fritz Busch. Seventeen 12" records (33 sides) in Sets VM-313/4/5†; price complete with albums \$18.88.

### CAST

Count Almaviva .....	Roy Henderson
Countess Almaviva .....	Aulikki Rautawaara
Susanna .....	Audrey Mildmay
Figaro .....	Willi Domgraf-Fassbaender
Cherubino .....	Luise Helletsgruber
Marcellina .....	Constance Willis
Basilio .....	Heddle Nash
Bartolo .....	Norman Allin and Italo Tajo
Barbarina .....	Winifred Radford
Antonio .....	Fergus Dunlop
Curzio .....	Morgan Jones

**DON GIOVANNI.** The Glyndebourne Festival Opera Company, conducted by Fritz Busch. Twenty-three 12" records (46 sides) in Sets VM-423/4/5†; price complete with albums \$25.69.

### CAST

Don Giovanni .....	John Brownlee
The Commendatore .....	David Franklin
Donna Anna .....	Ina Souez
Don Ottavio .....	Koloman von Pataky
Donna Elvira .....	Luise Helletsgruber
Leporello .....	Salvatore Baccaloni
Masetto .....	Roy Henderson
Zerlina .....	Audrey Mildmay

**DIE ZAUBERFLOTE.** Famous soloists, chorus, and Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham. Nineteen 12" records (37 sides) in Sets VM-541/2†; price complete with albums \$20.44.

### CAST

Sarastro .....	Wilhelm Strienz
Tamino .....	Helge Roswaenge
Speaker .....	Walter Grossmann
Second Priest .....	Ernst Fabbry
Queen of the Night .....	Erna Berger
Pamina .....	Tiana Lemnitz
1st Lady .....	Hilde Scheppan
2nd Lady .....	Elfride Marherr
3rd Lady .....	Rut Berglund
Papageno .....	Gerhard Hüsch
An Old Woman (Papagena) .....	Irma Beilke
Monostatos .....	Heinrich Tessmer
1st Boy .....	Irma Beilke
2nd Boy .....	Carla Spletter
3rd Boy .....	Rut Berglund
1st Armed Man .....	Heinrich Tessmer
2nd Armed Man .....	Walter Grossmann

**COSI' FAN TUTTI.** The Glyndebourne Festival Opera Company, conducted by Fritz Busch. Twenty 12" records (40 sides) in Sets VM-812/3/4†; price complete with albums \$22.56.

### CAST

Fiordiligi .....	Ina Souez
Dorabella .....	Luise Helletsgruber
Ferrando .....	Heddle Nash
Guglielmo .....	Willi Domgraf-Fassbaender
Don Alfonso .....	John Brownlee
Despina .....	Irene Eisinger



There is also still available a Victor recording by Yehudi Menuhin and the London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Sir Landon Ronald (V-M124†). The new recording is, at this time, not particularly welcome, not being called for by lack of other versions or distinguished by superior qualities. Performance and recording are both run-of-the-mill. C-M517† can serve only to increase the bewilderment of those who attempt to derive from the published lists the methods by which recording companies select compositions, orchestras, and soloists during a period when materials are scarce.

### CHOPIN (FREDERIC-FRANCOIS)

#### CHOPIN: *Préludes*, Opus 28. Egon Petri (piano).

Four 12" records (8 sides) in Set C-M523†; price complete with album \$4.72.

The twenty-four *Préludes* that make up Chopin's Opus 28 require a pianist of a special sort for their complete revelation. He must be without technical limitations, of course. More important, he must understand and project a variety of moods ranging from thunderous bravado to feminine delicacy, from the forthright statements of rugged health to the feverish complaints of sickness. No composer is less well represented than Chopin by a performance that is pianistically correct and psychologically unresilient. Some years ago, Victor gave us a complete recording of Opus 28 by Alfred Cortot (V-M282) that was, save for some distortion of piano tone due to then-current methods of recording, entirely right and satisfactory.

Now, in a laudable attempt to fill in a gap in its catalogue caused by the dropping of a superannuated recording of Opus 28 by Robert Lortat (C-M110) Columbia has had the *Préludes* recorded as played by Egon Petri. The recording is fuzzy, unsharp, and at times extremely tubby. That much is certain. Turning to the interpretation, however, it is difficult to be categorical, whatever the temptation. Mr. Petri is a highly respected pianist of unlimited technique. His re-creation of the *Préludes*, nevertheless, seems to this reviewer wholly inadequate. Hazzarding a guess, perhaps he is too much the keyboard giant, the digital wizard, to reveal the neurotic poetry of the less assertive *Préludes*. In the bigger, more masculine and positive ones, he is at home. But when the feminine, recessive side of Chopin's musical nature insinuates a darkling, chromatic softness into the music, Mr. Petri plows ahead unaware, or at least unsympathetic. In all honesty, this reviewer will continue to

regard the Cortot version as the best to be had until a more appropriate pianist than Petri is given the benefit of truly superior recording.

### FALLA (MANUEL DE)

FALLA: *El Amor Brujo—Ritual Fire Dance* & NOVA-CEK: *Perpetual Motion*. All-American Orchestra, conducted by Leopold Stokowski. 12" record (2 sides) No. C-11879D; price \$1.05.

What has happened to Leopold Stokowski, though it might have been foreseen in certain suspect elements of his early work, is tragic to witness. That a man who once brought one of the greatest of modern orchestras to perfect concert pitch and — even though only at times — used it to give brilliantly living performances of great music should now be represented on the record lists month after month as the conductor of a second-rate orchestra playing "arrangements" and "syntheses" is a tragedy, even though bookkeeping may not prove it so. The latest addition to his altogether unfortunate series of Columbia recordings with the All-American Orchestra is no better and no worse than its predecessors. One side of it presents the much overplayed "Fire Dance" from Falla's *El Amor Brujo* in a version marked "Falla-Stokowski," a performance marred by excessive "personality" and extreme diversion from the composer's intentions. The other side is another adaptation, this time of Ottokar Eugen Novacek's *Perpetuum Mobile*. As re-orchestrated and performed here it may seem perpetual, but notably lacks motion. The recording as such has neither conspicuous faults nor conspicuous virtues. It is, in short, a waste of Stokowski's time, precious materials, and the listener's attention.

GOUNOD: *Roméo et Juliette—Que fais-tu* & FAUST — *Faites-lui mes aveux*, see COLLECTIONS: Gladys Swarthout in French Opera Airs.

### HANDEL (GEORGE FRIDERIC)

HANDEL: *Nel dolce dell'oblio* (Solo Cantata). Katherine Harris (soprano), Alfred Mann & Anton Winkler (recorders), Edith Weiss-Mann (harpstichord), & Lucy Weiss (viola da gamba). 12" record (2 sides) No. MW-103; price \$1.31.

The problem of placing the preponderant majority of Handel's compositions before a present-day public is one that has occupied musicians and musicologists for years.



So much of the magnificently varied legacy left by Handel is in forms no longer in vogue, forms not easily adapted to contemporary concert and recital conditions, that it is always in danger of being left exclusively to students. No composer less deserves that fate. One of the most welcome gifts the gramophone can bring is the works of Handel performed as they were intended. Particularly welcome is this exquisitely conceived performance of one of his Italian secular cantatas for solo voice (No. 17 in Volume 52 of the Chrysander edition), *Nel dolce dell'oblio*. Miss Harris' voice is entirely at home here, and projects the lovely vocal line subtly and with understanding. The accompaniment is beautifully gauged to her, and shows us the recorder placed as it should be among other instruments. Here is one of the truly distinguished records of the year. Although it is slightly under-recorded, once more requiring so much volume from an average gramophone as to bring in too much surface noise, it is in every other respect superior to the only other recording of *Nel dolce dell'oblio* — MC-1010, with Ethel Luening accompanied by flute, cello, and harpsichord. Hargail Recorder Records has every reason — save the one purely mechanical one — to be proud of having added this performance to the lists.

## KERN (JEROME)

**KERN:** Mark Twain: Portrait for Orchestra. André Kostelanetz and His Orchestra. Two 12" records (4 sides) in Set C-X227†; price complete with album \$2.62.

In the middle 1920's, as the result of Paul Whiteman's activities, and in particular because of his enormously successful presentation of *Rhapsody in Blue*, a musical mixture known as "symphonic jazz" came into prominence. It consisted of an uncomfortable marriage between the forms of classic and romantic music and the essentially short-winded materials of Tin Pan Alley. Anyone who lived through the period will recall such of its popular achievements as *An American in Paris*, *New Year's Eve in New York*, *Mississippi Suite*, *Three Shades of Blue*, and *Manhattan Sereenade*. Under the batons of Paul Whiteman and Nathaniel Shilkret, the unhappy form made a determined, but losing, fight for existence. Then the essential cleavage between jazz and symphonic orchestral music reasserted itself, and the one lasting result of the unsuccessful marriage — aside from such freak successes as *Rhapsody in Blue* itself and Gershwin's *Concerto in F* — was the incomprehensible mishmash known as the "symphonic arrangement."

From time to time, "symphonic jazz" tried to rouse itself from its sickbed, but most often had so altered in appearance as to be unrecognizable. Not until Jerome Kern all but succeeded in spoiling the remarkable tunes he had composed for *Show Boat* — in his overdressed *Scenario for Orchestra on Themes from Show Boat* — did an authentic piece of symphonic jazz again attract widespread attention. That work should have proved to both Mr. Kern and the public that his style is eminently unsuited to extended forms. Now, however, André Kostelanetz — today's pre-eminent practitioner of the symphonic arrangement — has again led Mr. Kern from shore to a point far beyond his depth. Attempting to evoke Mark Twain in a four-movement work for full orchestra, the composer of a dozen popular songs of apparent immortality has succeeded in being little more than spineless and cloying. Mark Twain here becomes a belated addition to the cast of *Show Boat*. The whole thing is slick, rubbery, and invertebrate. One or two tunes all but worthy of the composer of *Make Believe*, of *Who*, of *Raggedy Ann*, make *Mark Twain* worth listening to, but serve finally to underline the fact that what both Mr. Kern and Mr. Kostelanetz have done is misuse an honest talent. The performance has the oleaginous Kostelanetz quality that sicklies over whatever is good and adds to the meretriciousness of what is not. Columbia has given some of its best recent recording to the set.

## MASSENET (JULES)

**MASSENET:** *Thais* — *Méditation* & **SARASATE:** *Romanza Andaluza*. Nathan Milstein (violin) and Artur Balsam (piano). 12" record (2 sides) No. C-71400D; price \$1.05.

Continuing the series of encore favorites begun in August with *Humoresque* and *Träumerei*, Columbia now gives us Nathan Milstein in the saccharine *Méditation* from Massenet's *Thais* — of which more than enough versions exist to satisfy the not noticeably eager public demand — and Sarasate's *Romanza Andaluza*, Opus 22, No. 1, already represented in the Columbia catalogue as played by Ossy Renardy (C-69621D). The playing is admirable, the recording adequate. Leaving aside the question of music of the first rank, would not Columbia do better by Mr. Milstein and itself if it presented him as soloist in one of the numerous concertos not at present represented on its lists — say, for instance, the *Paganini Concerto in D major*?

**NOVACEK:** *Perpetual Motion*, see **FALLA:** *El Amor Brujo* — *Ritual Fire Dance*.



## RIMSKY-KORSAKOV (NIKOLAI ANDREIEVICH)

**RIMSKY-KORSAKOV:** *Scheherazade* — Symphonic Suite, Opus 35 & *Tsar Saltan*—March. San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Pierre Monteux. Five 12" records (10 sides) in Set VM-920†; price complete with album \$5.77.

Looking at the Victor catalogue, which still contains two earlier recordings of *Scheherazade* (VM-269†, the Philadelphia Orchestra with Stokowski, and VM-509†, the London Philharmonic with Dorati), the latter released only four years ago, it was difficult in advance to decide why a third version was called for. Additionally, of course, there is Columbia Set CM-398†, the Cleveland Orchestra with Rodzinski. *Scheherazade* is undoubtedly music of persistent charm, but it seemed obvious that it was possible to possess an overabundance of it. Only a recording so superior in all details that it would immediately occupy first place among available versions would, it seemed in advance, justify the appearance of another *Scheherazade* at this time. It is a real pleasure to learn that Pierre Monteux, with the extremely able collaboration of the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, has produced exactly such a superb recording. Victor has given him subtly modulated recording and pressed the result on some of the best surfaces heard on this side of the Atlantic. This is, and is likely for a long time to remain, the definitive recorded version of *Scheherazade*. The odd tenth side is given over to the only available domestic recording of a brilliant march from Rimsky-Korsakov's opera, *The Legend of Tsar Saltan*.

Monteux requires nine ten-inch record sides for his projection of *Scheherazade* — Stokowski needed twelve, Dorati and Rodzinski ten. Throughout, Monteux's tempo is admirable and inevitable. Never overloading this swirling pictorial music with weight it cannot bear, he brings out all its emblazoned colors and garish life. Adding *Scheherazade* to his versions of the D'Indy *Symphony on a French Mountain Air* (VM-913†) and Ravel's *La Valse* (VM-820†), he has established his collaboration with the San Francisco Symphony as a heartwarming and altogether welcome addition to the story of recording.

The descriptive leaflet accompanying VM-920† carries the following note: "For reasons of most advisable division of the sections of this work, the *Tsar Sultan March* is made side number one, thereby making the break in the middle of the movement best possible when turned for the second sequence of sides." Translated into less congested English

this means that (this being a DM set), the *March from Tsar Saltan* occupies the A of the first record. *Scheherazade* begins on the A side of the second record, and thereafter continues to the A side of the fifth record, and then — on the B sides — back to the first record in the customary manner of DM sets. As this arrangement still leaves the break between the A and B sides of the last record in the middle of a movement, it would require a very subtle mind indeed to search out any advantage in this confusing departure.

**SARASATE:** *Romanza Andaluza*, see **MASSENET:** *Thais—Méditation*.

## SCHUBERT (FRANZ PETER)

**SCHUBERT:** *Trio No. 1, B flat major, Opus 99*. Artur Rubinstein (piano), Jascha Heifetz (violin), & Emanuel Feuermann (cello). Four 12" records (8 sides) in Set VM-923†; price complete with album \$4.72.

Last month we reviewed in these pages the extraordinary recording of this same Schubert *Trio, B flat major*, by the Elly Ney Trio on Decca-Polydor surfaces. It seemed, in all honesty, unlikely that the announced Victor version could match its many excellences. Experience has taught that a trio of eminent soloists is not necessarily — or even usually — as unified and adjusted as a trio made up of professional ensemble players. The names of Rubinstein, Heifetz, and the late Emanuel Feuermann assured us of passages of superb individual playing. Beyond that, insofar as the Schubert *Trio* was concerned, they guaranteed nothing. Long dismay over the continued inferiority of American materials or recording processes left little room for hoping that, even were the new performance to come up to that of the Elly Ney Trio in nicety and subtlety, the end result — the Victor records — would challenge the Decca-Polydor set.

The Rubinstein-Heifetz-Feuermann set is altogether an intensely welcome surprise. The performance, first of all, is exquisite — exactly balanced, rhythmically unified, and gracefully projected. Then the recording as such is one of Victor's best in the field of chamber music. Everything the three performers and their instruments gave out is here faithfully preserved. Topping the list of surprises, however, is the smoothness and noiselessness of the surfaces. There is, perhaps, a somewhat narrower spread of frequencies, particularly at the bass end, in the Victor than in the Decca-Polydor recording. Aside from that, however, the *Trio* being the wholly cherishable music it is, choice between the two versions will depend on strictly personal reactions. As the



Decca-Polydor records are likely to be unavailable in the very near future, the appearance of the impressively beautiful Rubinstein-Heifetz-Feuermann recording is timely and welcome. Victor is to be congratulated on so distinguished an addition to its catalogue.

## TCHAIKOVSKY (PIOTR ILYICH)

**TCHAIKOVSKY:** *Capriccio Italien*, Opus 45. New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham. Two 12" records (4 sides) in Set C-X229†; price complete with album \$2.62.

Announcement that the first of Sir Thomas Beecham's American recordings was about to be issued raised the hopes of all who seriously care about good music. For the sardonic English conductor has added, not one or two, but a dozen and more of the most superb sets and single records to the repertoire. Whether the composer in hand was Mozart, Bizet, Chabrier, Rossini, Tchaikovsky, or Handel, he brought to his gramophonic interpretations the same musical distinction and vitality that had long established his concert-hall performances among those that revitalize the art of music. A new set from Beecham and the London Philharmonic Orchestra was, for several years, enough to assure the initiate that a given month's production of new records contained one item of the first rank.

Columbia's announcement that Beecham's first records with the New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra would be Tchaikovsky's *Capriccio Italien* was disappointing. Not because it was Tchaikovsky — for Beecham had worked his miracle with *Francesca da Rimini* and the *Fifth Symphony*, proving again that Tchaikovsky, far from being dead, is not even moribund. But the *Capriccio Italien*, never one of Tchaikovsky's best works, would, even with Beecham and recording at their respective bests, not be music worthy of conductor or engineers. Now, with the records at hand, there is little to lift the disappointment. What little there is lies in Beecham's conducting. It is possible to question his interpretation of the direction placed above the opening measures — *andante un poco rubato* — and to say that he starts too slowly. Nevertheless, his over-all conception of the music vivifies it, and his attention to details, a department in which he is without peer, assures the projection of his wishes. The Philharmonic-Symphony, far from its top form of a few years ago, is a good orchestra, nothing more. It is to the questions of recording and surface, however, that negative answers must be given. The recording lacks

quality and *chiaroscuro*. The record surfaces themselves, if compared with the best English and Continental surfaces, are unforgivable, rough, and noisy.

With wide gaps in its catalogue, Columbia can ill afford to waste Beecham. It is earnestly to be hoped that it will not make the mistake of believing that his name alone will sell records. Those who are most enthusiastic about him are precisely those who know a good recording from a bad one. With all-round care and thought to match those given his English recordings, care and thought starting with the selection of compositions to be recorded, and extending through details of recording and surface, domestic Columbia can build Beecham into one of its most valuable and valued properties. A few recordings as mediocre as the *Capriccio Italien* in every department except conducting will serve, gramophonically speaking, to tarnish the Beecham label beyond recognition.

There have been numerous recordings of the *Capriccio Italien*, none, perhaps better performed than this Beecham version, but several better recorded. Those who wish a traditionally bombastic interpretation will find it in the recording by the Boston "Pops" Orchestra (VM-632†). A more straightforward reading — one unquestionably closer to Tchaikovsky's aims — is that by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Alois Melichar (D-LY6066/7). In every technical detail these Decca-Polydor records continue to be superior to American records.

**THOMAS:** *Mignon—Connais-tu le pays & Je connais un pauvre enfant*, see **COLLECTIONS:** Gladys Swarthout in French Opera Airs.

## VERDI (GIUSEPPE)

**VERDI:** *Aida—Triumphal March and Ballet Music*, Act II. Columbia Broadcasting Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Howard Barlow. 12" record (2 sides) No. C-71401D; price \$1.05.

Omitting the vocal passages, Howard Barlow has recorded the stirring, if hackneyed, grand march from the second act of *Aida*, and has tacked on some of the ballet music from the same act as a sort of anticlimax. Something is missing in the interpretation. One guess might be that, in an understandable desire not to be too blatant, Mr. Barlow has denatured the *Triumphal March* of its triumph. Whatever the cause, the result is that music of enormous theatrical vitality has been made to sound proper and



pawky. The recording lacks clangor and resonance. Something half way between this and the overblown recording Victor has been awarding to the Boston "Pops" Orchestra would have given us a pulse-stirring record of the music in hand, supposing that such a record were called for at all. The present version seems destined to serve only as one more obscure item in the catalogue.

## WAGNER (RICHARD)

**WAGNER: Lohengrin** — *Einsam in trüben Tagen* (Elsas Traum), Act I, Scene 2 & *Tannhäuser—Allmächt'ge Jungfrau* (Elisabeths Gebet), Act III, Scene 1. Astrid Varnay (soprano), with orchestra conducted by Erich Leinsdorf. 12" record (2 sides) No. C-71399D; price \$1.05.

The 1941-1942 season of the Metropolitan Opera was marked by the emergence, in youthful Astrid Varnay, of an expertly capable soprano of all work. Miss Varnay, despite lack of experience, knew her way around the opera stage. Her voice, not notably beautiful in quality, was strong and clear except for a tendency to vibrato that was alarming in one so young. Besides singing the roles for which she was scheduled, she stepped into vacancies caused by illness, and with aplomb got through assignments that might have been expected to terrify a novice. One critic suggested that if Miss Varnay could be persuaded to retire from the stage at once and apply herself to grueling study for five years, she could reasonably be expected to reappear as one of the most valuable members of any operatic company. The same critic remarked that a tendency to imitate Kirsten Flagstad without that lady's equipment, and at little more than half her age, was likely to be one certain way of ruining a voice.

Miss Varnay's first record adds nothing to what those who heard her in the opera house or via radio knew after her first performance. Taking two of the most popular and most frequently recorded Wagnerian excerpts, she gives an account of herself that is in equal parts blameless and undistinguished. The Flagstad style still becomes her poorly. The vibrato would seem to be growing on her. The voice shows signs of strain. Mr. Leinsdorf and his musicians, except for some curious jerkiness of tempo in *Elsas Traum*, have done well by her, and Columbia has not stinted care in the recording. One need not be a seer, however, to predict that if Miss Varnay continues to do this sort of singing much longer, she will have a brief and unfortunate career.

It would be sad indeed to watch the sacrifice of such unusually promising material on the block of quick success and easy rewards.

## WALDTEUFEL (EMIL)

**WALDTEUFEL: Estudiantina Waltz.** Boston "Pops" Orchestra, conducted by Arthur Fiedler. 10" record (2 sides) No. V-10-1024; price 79c.

That much-recorded souvenir of the France of another day (at least ten previous recordings of it can be traced), the *Estudiantina Waltz* has now been given a dusting-off by Mr. Fiedler and his men. In its usual brash style — vigorous to the point of brutality — the Boston "Pops" Orchestra plays this trifle for all it is worth — and more. For hardness and brilliance of recording this record is scarcely to be matched, but it must be remarked that only a very few super-reproducing machines can absorb and give out all it has without trembling.

## CHRISTMAS CAROLS

**THE FIRST NOWELL** (arr. Stainer) & **GOOD KING WENCESLAS** (arr. Stainer). Nelson Eddy (baritone) with orchestra conducted by Robert Armstrong. 10" record (2 sides) No. C-4296M; price 79c.

Two of the most familiar and most enchanting Christmas carols have been recorded here in arrangements by Sir John Stainer. Nelson Eddy sings them in his now-customary listless manner, entirely robbing them of both joy and tenderness. The recording is excellently clear and beautifully balanced.

**JOSEPH CAME SEEKING A RESTING PLACE** (Willoughby) & **SONG OF THE CHRISTMAS PRESENTS** (Andalusian carol) & **SERBIAN CRIB CAROL** (arr. Gaul). Westminster Choir, conducted by John Finley Williamson. 10" record (2 sides) No. C-17351D; price 79c.

The charming and unfamiliar carols on this record are a highly welcome addition to a limited repertoire. *Joseph Came Seeking a Resting Place*, perhaps least attractive of the three, is sung a cappella. *Song of the Christmas Presents*, however, has a fascinating accompaniment that would seem to be played on castanets and small bells or crotals. Both it and the *Serbian Crib Carol* have definitely non-German-English color that may at first seem strange to



ears accustomed only to carols of another sort. They are, however, music of simple beauty, and reflect the Christmas atmosphere in their own way. Columbia has, unfortunately, not solved the enormous problems of recording a choir. Except for passages in *Joseph Came Seeking a Resting Place*, the words are incomprehensible, and the voices, instead of blending in independence, tend to blur like tints in a watercolor over which a liquid has been spilled. Whishing surface noises, too, add an unpleasant unintentional rhythm in passages where the voices pause. Despite its defects, however, this unusual record is a valuable addition to the store of Christmas music.

## COLLECTIONS

**GLADYS SWARTHOUT IN FRENCH OPERA ARIAS.** Gladys Swarthout (mezzo-soprano), with the Victor Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Wilfred Pelletier. Two 12" records (4 sides) in Set VM-925; price complete with album \$2.62.

The arias included in this set are:

**GOUNOD:** *Roméo et Juliette—Que fais-tu* (Stephano's recitative and aria), Act III.

**GOUNOD:** *Faust—Faites-lui mes aveux* (Siebel's aria), Act III.

**THOMAS:** *Mignon—Connais-tu le pays*, Act I & *Je connais un pauvre enfant* (recitative and *styrienne*), Act II.

Having rid herself of that feeling of constraint and lifelessness that has marred some of her recent records, Miss Swarthout sings with vividness and distinction. The warm, round, rich quality of her voice has never been in question. When she lets herself go, sings — as she does in these records — with evident enjoyment of the task in hand, and works herself through mere singing into the projection of a character and a specific situation, she is one of the most attractive artists before the public today. She has been recorded amply, if at one or two points somewhat shrilly. In the selections from *Roméo et Juliette* and *Faust*, she is limited by the nature of music and text. It is in the sincerely moving phrases of *Connais-tu le pays* and the bright rhythms of the *Mignon Styrienne* that she has an occasion and rises to it, making what many are certain to call the best record of her career. The accompaniments, lacking any pretenses to distinction, are entirely adequate, the surfaces clean. Gladys Swarthout at her best here assures true musical enjoyment.

**JOHN CARTER IN SENTIMENTAL SONG.** John Carter (tenor), with instrumental accompaniment. Four 10" records (8 sides) in Set C-M522; price complete with album \$3.67.

The cover of this album truly reveals and describes its contents. On a pale blue background is painted a valentine on which, above a bowknot — and surrounded by red and pale blue flowers and stars — a blue turtledove holds a large red heart. Quickly turning the cover, one discovers the contents to be:

*Roses of Picardy* (Weatherly-Wood)

*Love Sends a Little Gift of Roses* (Crooke-Openshaw)

*Trees* (Kilmer-Rasbach)

*The Old Refrain* (arr. Kreisler)

*Somewhere a Voice is Calling* (Newton-Tate)

*Come Where My Love Lies Dreaming* (Foster)

*The Rosary* (Nevin)

*Drink To Me Only With Thine Eyes*

John Carter, a winner of the Metropolitan Auditions of the Air, and for several seasons an inconspicuous member of the Metropolitan roster, has a high lyric tenor voice of the type usually described as Irish. He sings easily in a straightforward manner entirely unmarred by either insight or sentimentality. He is liable to blame only for a tendency to say "uh" between syllables and for the fact that two-thirds of what he has here recorded is an insult to music. Not his fault are the sickeningly lachrymose accompaniments that ruin even so delightful a song as *Drink to Me Only With Thine Eyes*. Not his fault, except as an accomplice, is the false and withering atmosphere of determined sentimentality that extends to every phase of this album, from choice of cover design to flat slickness of recording. It is to be doubted that a sufficient portion of the record-buying public is moonstruck, tasteless, and spendthrift enough to purchase *John Carter in Sentimental Song*. Had Columbia given us an honest recording of Mr. Carter's performance of two secondary operatic tenor arias poorly represented on the lists, it would have served itself, Mr. Carter, and the public well. In this album, it has served everyone very badly indeed.



## DICTION

## DICKENS (CHARLES)

**DICKENS:** *A Christmas Carol* (adapted by Edith Meiser, directed by Tom McKnight, composed and conducted by Leith Stevens). Basil Rathbone and a Hollywood cast. Three 12" records (6 sides) in Set C-M521†; price complete with album \$3.67.

The best-known and most enduringly popular of all English stories of the Yuletide, Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, has been given a new and attractive dress. Edith Meiser, once a familiar figure of the New York stage, has adapted it cleverly for gramophonic (or radio) presentation, and appropriate background music has been supplied by Leith Stevens in a score that is at once unifying and unobtrusive. The all-important role of Scrooge is played with exactly the correct amount of hamminess by Basil Rathbone, and the supporting cast keeps itself attuned to his interpretation of the key part. In the list of that cast, it is interesting, in the role of Christmas Past, to find the one-time king of the silver screen, Francis X. Bushman. Voices and music are alike well recorded. Choice among the three recordings of *A Christmas Carol* now available (D-290†, with Ronald Colman as Scrooge, and V-G29 are the older sets) will depend largely on personal reactions to the timbres and uses of the voices involved.

## RELIGIOUS

**BIBLETONE—The Voice of the Bible.** Album A—three 10" records (6 sides); price complete with album \$3.94. Album B—three 10" records (6 sides); price complete with album \$3.94.

These records contain well-loved passages from the Bible. Album A has Psalms 23, 46, 91, 121, and 131, all with organ background; the Sermon on the Mount (including the Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer); and, with church-bells background, I John 3, 4; I Corinthians 13. Album B has I Samuel 17 (David and Goliath); II Peter 1, with organ background; Deuteronomy 5, 6 (The Ten Commandments); Leviticus 26; Proverbs 3, 4; Mark 12, Matthew 22, with organ introduction; John 14, 15; Isaiah 40, 41, with organ introduction. The vocal announcement of each passage is somewhat distracting. The recordings are clear. The two volumes are for sale to schools at the special combined price of \$7.35.

**THE SUNDAY GOSPELS.** Reverend Father P. J. O'Connor. Twelve 12" records (24 sides); price complete with album \$15.75.

These records contain the Sunday Gospels from the revised version of the New Testament, used by permission of the Confraternity Committee. They are sponsored by the Preachers Institute of the Catholic University of America, and issued by National Catholic Sound Recording Specialists. The recording was done by RCA-Victor, and is clear and clean. An entire Church year of gospels is contained in the set, there being two or three Sundays represented on each record side.

## DECCA CLASSICAL RECORDS

The Decca domestic pressings of European recordings have now been discontinued for some time. THE GRAMOPHONE SHOP still has many of the most attractive titles in this series in stock. The following is a partial listing of the 12" records (selling at 75c each) that we are still, for a brief period, able to offer. Other available titles will be listed from time to time as space in the SUPPLEMENT allows.

## ALBENIZ

25195 *Tango, D major, Opus 165, No. 2.* Edith Lorand Orchestra.

## BACH (JOHANN CHRISTIAN)

25014 *Sinfonia (Lucio Silla).* Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam, conducted by Willem Mengelberg.

## BARTOK

25195 *Five Roumanian Dances.* Edith Lorand Orch.

## BELLINI

25135 *Norma—Mira, O Norma!* W. Amerighi-Rutili, soprano & Lina Lanza, alto. *Norma—Ah, crudele!* W. Amerighi-Rutili, soprano & G. Colombo, tenor. Orchestra accompaniments conducted by A. Albergoni.

## BERLIOZ

25029 *Roméo et Juliette—Roméo seul & Tristesse.* Orchestra of the Concerts Colonne, conducted by Gabriel Pierné.



**BIZET**

- 25131 *Carmen*—Selections. Dajos Bela Orchestra. 2 sides.

**BOITO**

- 25177/ *Mefistofele*—*La Notte del Sabba Classico*, Act  
25179 IV (5 sides). Maria Castagna, Augusta Con-  
cato, Antonio Righetti, Giuseppe Nessi, Ferdi-  
nando Ciniselli, La Scala Chorus & Orchestra  
conducted by Panizza. *Berlioz: Rakóczy March*  
(1 side). La Scala Orchestra conducted by  
Ettore Panizza.

**BORODIN**

- 25188 *Prince Igor*—*Vladimir's Cavatina*. Vladimir  
Rosing (tenor), with piano.

**BRAHMS**

- 25001 *Wiegenlied* ("Guten Abend"), Op. 49, No. 4  
& Mozart: *Wiegenlied*. Emmy Bettendorf, so-  
prano & orch.

**CHABRIER**

- 25022 *España Rapsodie*. Orchestra of the Concerts  
Colonne, Paris, conducted by Gabriel Pierné. 2  
sides.

**CHAMINADE**

- 25189 *Callirhoe Ballet Suite*—*Pas des Echarpes*  
(Scarf Dance), *Danse de Callirhoe*, *Andante*,  
& *Valse*. Victor Olof Salon Orchestra. 2 sides.

**CHOPIN**

- 25117 *Barcarolle in F sharp major*, Op. 60. Alfred  
Höhn, piano. 2 sides.  
25113 *Etude No. 12, C minor* ("Revolutionary").  
Op. 10, No. 12; *Etude No. 14, F minor*, Op. 25,  
No. 2; & *Scarlatti: Pastorale*. Alfred Höhn,  
piano.

**CUI**

- 25188 *Hunger*; *Rachmaninoff: Do Not Depart*; &  
*Borodin: Prince Igor*—*Vladimir's Cavatina*.  
Vladimir Rosing, tenor & piano.

**DEBUSSY**

- 25002 *String Quartet in G minor*—3rd Mvt. (*Andan-  
tino*). Roth String Quartet. 2 sides.

**Piano Works**

- 25021 *Suite Bergamasque*—*Prélude & Clair de Lune*.  
Marius François Gaillard, piano.  
25187 *Suite: "Pour le Piano"*—*Toccata in C sharp  
minor* & *Moszkowski: Valse in E major*. Eileen  
Joyce, piano.

**DVORAK**

- 25144 *Slavonic Dances No. 8 in G minor & No. 16  
in A flat major*. Philharmonic Orchestra con-  
ducted by Issai Dobrowen.

**FALL**

- 25034 *The Girl on the Train*—Waltz & J. Strauss:  
*Schatz (Zigeunerbaron) Waltz*. Dajos Bela  
Orchestra.

**FRANCK**

- 25066/ *The Redemption*. Orchestra of the Concerts  
25067 Poulet, conducted by Gaston Poulet.

**GOUNOD**

- 25045 *Faust*—Waltz. Dajos Bela Orchestra.

**IVANOVICI**

- 25114 *Danube Waves (Donauwellen) Waltz & O.*  
*Straus: The Last Waltz*—Waltz. Edith Lorand  
Orchestra.

**LISZT**

- 25175 *Jeux d'eaux à la villa d'Este*. Claudio Arrau,  
piano 2 sides.

**MASCAGNI**

- 25089 *Cavalleria Rusticana*—Selections. Dajos Bela  
Orchestra. 2 sides.

**MENDELSSOHN**

- 25186 *Trio No. 1 in D minor*, Op. 49—2nd Mvt. (*An-  
dante*) & 3rd Mvt. (*Scherzo*). Amsterdam Con-  
certgebouw Trio. 2 sides.

**MOSZKOWSKI**

- 25187 *Valse in E major*, Op. 34, No. 1 & Debussy:  
*Toccata in C sharp minor* ("Pour le Piano").  
Eileen Joyce, piano.

**MOZART**

- 25077/ *Serenade No. 10 in B flat major*, K. 361 (13  
25078 *Wind instruments*). Philharmonic Orchestra  
Members conducted by Fritz Stiedry. 4 sides.  
25102/ *Violin Concerto No. 5 in A major*, K. 219  
25105 ("Turkish Concerto"). Josef Wolfsthal (violin)  
& Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Dr.  
Weissmann. 8 sides.  
25025 *Violin Sonata No. 34 in F major*, K. 376 (*So-  
nata No. 7*)—1st & 3rd Mvts. Grete Eweler  
(violin) & Alice Ehlers (harpsichord). 2 sides.

**Don Giovanni (Don Juan)**

- 25040 *Overture*. Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by  
Dr. Weissmann. 2 sides.

**Il Seraglio (Die Entführung aus dem Serail)**

- 25155 *Overture*. Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by  
Dr. Weissmann. 2 sides.

- 20447 *Martern aller Arten*, Oct II. Maria Cebotari,  
soprano & orch.—Heger. 2 sides.

**Choral Works and Songs**

- 25072 *Laudate Dominum* (from the *Vesperes So-  
lennes de Confessore*, K. 339) & Anon.: *In  
Dulci Jubilo*. Gertrud Baumann (soprano) &  
Irmel Choir.

- 25001 *Wiegenlied* ("Schlafe, mein Prinzchen"), K.  
350 & Brahms: *Wiegenlied*. Emmy Bettendorf,  
soprano; piano & violin acc.



## PROKOFIEFF

- 25123/ The Love for Three Oranges: Symphonic  
 25125 Suite, Op. 33a—Les ridicules, Scènes infernale (Waltz-Scherzo), Marche, Scherzo, La prince et la princesse, La fuite (5 sides) & Chout: Ballet Suite, Op. 21—Danse finale (1 side). Orchestra of the Concerts Poulet, Paris, conducted by Gaston Poulet.

## RACHMANINOFF

- 25188 Do not depart (Stay, my love), Op. 4, No. 1: Cui: Hunger; Borodin: Prince Igor—Vladimir's Cavatina. Vladimir Rosing, tenor & piano.

## RENIE

- 25050 Contemplation & Zabel: La Source. Henriette Rénie, harp solo.

## RESPIGHI

- 25169 Gagliarda & Wolf-Ferrari: Secret of Suzanne—Overture. Milan Symphony Orchestra, conducted by A. Guarneri.  
 25047 Villanella—Aria Antica. Milan Symphony Orchestra, conducted by A. Guarneri. 2 sides.

## ROSSINI

- 25087 Tancredi—Overture. Milan Symphony Orchestra conducted by Angelo Albergoni. 2 sides.

## SAINT-SAENS

- 25027 Marche Héroïque, Op. 34. Opéra-Comique Orchestra, Paris, conducted by G. Cloez. 2 sides.

## SCHUBERT, FRANZ

- 25032 Lilac Time (Arr. Berté)—Selections. Dajos Bela Orchestra. 2 sides.

## STRAUS, OSKAR

- 25114 The Last Waltz—Waltz & Ivanovici: Danube Waves Waltz. Edith Lorand Orchestra.

## STRAUSS, JOHANN (The Waltz King)

- 25037 Morning Papers (Morgenblätter) Waltz & Southern Roses (Rosen aus dem Süden) Waltz. Dajos Bela Orchestra.  
 25034 My Darling (Schatz) Waltz (from "Der Zigeunerbaron") & Fall: Girl on the Train Waltz. Dajos Bela Orchestra.

## STRAUSS, JOSEF

- 25045 Swallows Waltz. Dajos Bela Orchestra.

## STRAUSS, RICHARD

- 25031 Die Aegyptische Helena (The Egyptian Helen)—Helen's Awakening, Act I & Funeral March, Act II. Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Fritz Busch.  
 25150 Intermezzo—Waltz Scene. Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Hans Knappertsbusch. 2 sides.

## WAGNER

The Flying Dutchman (Der Fliegende Holländer)

- 25075 Jo-Ho-Hoe! Traft ihr das Schiff (Senta's Ballad). Emmy Bettendorf, soprano, with Chorus & Orchestra conducted by Mörike. 2 sides.

## Lohengrin

- 25052 Gott grüss euch, Act I, Scene 1 & Mein Herr und Gott (Königs Gebet), Act II, Scene 3. Ivar Andréén & Eduard Habich, basses & Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Dr. Weissmann.

- 25056 Gang zum Minster (Finale Act II). Meta Seinemeyer (soprano), Sigismund Pilinsky (tenor), Robert Burg (baritone), Hélène Jung (soprano), Fritz Dütterbernd (baritone), Chorus, Organ & Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Dr. Weissmann. 2 sides.

- 25061 Heil König Heinrich & Wo weilt nun der, Act III, Scene 2. Ivar Andréén, bass, Chorus & orchestra. 2 sides.

- 25026 Johannisnacht & Prügelzene (Cudgelling Scene), Act II Finale (Arr. Orchestra only). Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Max von Schillings. 2 sides.

## Tristan und Isolde

- 25191 Act II, Scene 1: Prelude, Isolde Awaits Tristan, The Lovers are Reunited (Concert Version). Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Max von Schillings. 2 sides.

- 25149 Act II, Scene 2: Night Scene & Love Song (Concert Version). Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Max von Schillings. 2 sides.

## Die Walküre (The Valkyries)

- 25030 Winterstürme wichen den Wonnemond (Sieg-mund's Love Song) & Meistersinger—Preislied. Bjorn Talén, tenor & orch.

## WEBER

- 25083 Jubilee (Jubel) Overture, Op. 59. Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Dr. Weissmann. 2 sides.

- 25090 Oberon—Ocean, thou mighty monster (Ozean, du Ungehauer). Act II. Emmy Bettendorf, soprano & orchestra. 2 sides.

- 25143 Preciosa—Overture. Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Dr. Weissmann. 2 sides.

## WOLF-FERRARI

- 25169 The Secret of Suzanne—Overture & Respighi: Gagliarda. Milan Symphony Orchestra conducted by A. Guarneri.

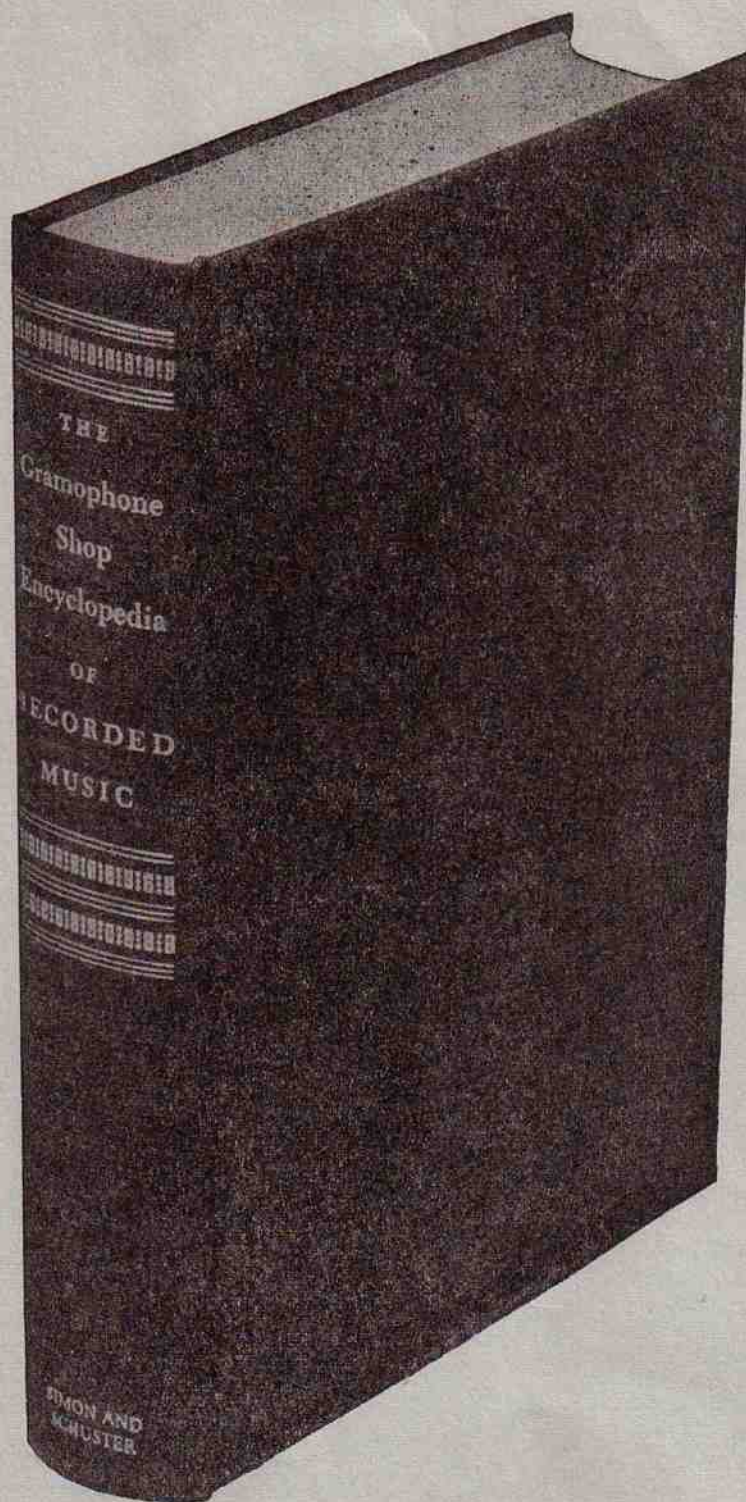
## ZABEL

- 25050 La Source & Rénie: Contemplation. Henriette Rénie, harp solo.



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